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RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0808
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1171
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 1600
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4004
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1370
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 2028
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0670
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC//DHO-7//
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1762
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK//DOOC/ECMO/CC/DAO/DOB/DOI//
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000246

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/27/2017
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: ACTIVIST'S MEMORIAL SERVICE PROVIDES CALL FOR
UNITY AGAINST REGIME

REF: A. HARARE 000245
[1](#)B. HARARE 000227 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. Eric Schultz under Section 1.4 b
/d

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (U) The Christian Alliance under the auspices of Save Zimbabwe Campaign held a spirited memorial service in Harare on March 27 for the opposition activist, Gift Tandare, killed by police on March 11. A crowd of over 600 attended the service at which MDC leaders Morgan Tsvangirai and Arthur Mutambara, and NCA leader Lovemore Mahduku spoke. Despite looming government threats, there was no overt police presence near the church. However, there are reports that following the event an MDC supporter who participated in the memorial service was abducted at gun point by unidentified men from a nearby shopping center. End Summary.

Delayed Memorial Service Proves Spirited Event

[1](#)2. (U) The Christian Alliance under the auspices of Save Zimbabwe Campaign held a spirited memorial service for Gift Tandare, the young activist killed by police on March 11 at the Save Zimbabwe prayer rally in the Highfield suburb of Harare (reftels). The event occurred after several delays, caused in large part by the government's abduction of

Tandare's body at gun point from his family on March 18. Despite threats from the government, there was no overt police presence around the church and a lively crowd of approximately 600 turned out to fill the church to capacity.

13. (C) Organizers told us they had wanted to hold the memorial service in the Glenview suburb of Harare, where Tandare lived with his wife and three children. However, local churches, intimidated by the GOZ, were reluctant to provide a venue. The organizers ultimately settled on the Northside Community Church in the affluent Borrowdale suburb, far removed from the high-density areas that are centers of MDC support.

Strong Words for Unity and Action

14. (U) Senior leadership from across the opposition movement and civil society attended the service. In a show of unity, Tsvangirai and Mutambara sat together in the front row near

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Tandare's grieving widow and children. The service began with a pastor from the Christian Alliance offering a sermon of condolence and encouragement. Promise Mkwanazi, president of Zimbabwe National Students' Union (ZINASU), subsequently invoked John F. Kennedy when he said "preventing a peaceful revolution today, only leads to a violent revolution tomorrow."

15. (U) Madhuku, who spoke next, taunted the government for its failure to follow through on threats to prevent the service. He called Tandare a martyr who had paid the

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ultimate price in pursuit of the opposition's goal) a free and democratic Zimbabwe. He called on the opposition to remember Tandare's sacrifice by preserving its new found unity of purpose. He also forcefully criticized African leaders and South African President Mbeki in particular, for their continued silence in response to Mugabe's brutal repression of Zimbabweans.

16. (U) Mutambara gave the event's most fiery speech, one that played well with the young MDC activists in attendance. He said the Mugabe regime had betrayed the ideals of the liberation struggle and that MDC activists were the true inheritors of the liberation struggle. Tandare was a "national liberation hero" who had died in the fight for freedom. Borrowing the words of Malcolm X, Mutambara said that Mugabe was an illegitimate leader that must be driven from power "by any means necessary." Mutambara also paraphrased Patrick Henry in saying the mantra for the opposition now had to be "give me freedom or give me death."

17. (U) Tsvangirai, the last speaker at the service, received a rapturous standing ovation from the assembly, including singing and dancing in aisles, when he walked up to the altar. He was more restrained than Mutambara, especially with respect to the opposition's response to government violence. Tsvangirai said some people were calling for an eye-for-an-eye but that the opposition had to remain non-violent. He said the MDC's goal was not to overthrow the government but to negotiate an end to 27 years of misrule on the basis of the party's "roadmap" that called for a unity government, a new constitution, and free and fair elections. However, Tsvangirai warned that the opposition would not participate in the presidential elections in 2008 under the current rules.

Activist Abducted

18. (C) Marring an otherwise peaceful event, unknown

assailants abducted MDC activist Last Maengahama as he departed the memorial service, according to Sydney Shisi, the coordinator of a youth development civic group. Maengahama had been invited by Tsvangirai during the memorial service to lead the assembly in signing the MDC's anthem before the opposition leader spoke. Shisi told us that witnesses reported that Maengahama -- who is a former elected official in the Harare suburb of Glenview -- was abducted at gun point from his vehicle as he drove to a nearby shopping center. Shisi said he had reported the abduction to the local police station.

Comment

19. (C) The numbers would doubtless have been several times larger if the event had been held in Glenview or another high-density suburb. Still, it was an impressive turnout under the circumstances and the venue may well have contributed to the government's relative restraint -- concern for Maengahama side. The ceremony itself was a powerful show of unity with most of the leadership from Mutambara's faction present (Welshman Ncube was the only prominent exception) and

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with Morgan Tsvangirai very much the man in charge. The opposition will try to continue that unity of purpose with a work stay-away planned by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) for April 3-4, and another prayer rally on April 14 in Bulawayo organized by the Save Zimbabwe coalition. End Comment.
SCHULTZ